UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.

Memphis, Tennessee
December 4, 1968

BLACK ORGANIZING PROJECT (BOP);
RACIAL MATTERS;
STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY (SDS);
INTERNAL SECURITY - SDS

Re: November 25 and 26, 1968, Disruption,
LeMoyne-Owen College, Memphis, Tennessee

Attention is directed to a communication made at Memphis, Tennessee, dated November 27, 1968, setting forth the fact that a Black Organizing Project (BOP), also known as Invaders, and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) coalition combined with a select small number of LeMoyne-Owen College students took over the administration building of this college on the night of November 25, 1968, and on the morning of November 26, 1968, took over two additional buildings finally dispersing around 1 p.m., November 26, 1968, agreeing to give the school administration a few days in which to further study and attempt to equitably settle a list of student demands for improvement on the campus and for more student participation in campus activities.

Set forth hereinafter are subsequent developments.

(A characterization of BOP and a characterization of SDS are set forth in the Appendix Section.)

On November 29, 1968, Lieutenant [redacted] Intelligence Bureau, Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department, advised that at approximately 3:25 p.m., November 26, 1968, after the students, BOP members, and SDS people had left the buildings at LeMoyne-Owen College, Squad Car 51 was called to answer a shooting call at Trigg and Mississippi Boulevard where it was determined through witnesses that workmen located just south of LeMoyne-Owen College had heard what sounded like several shots. They looked up and saw three unidentified male

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Negroes running south from the vicinity of the school. The workmen saw other male Negroes running behind the three and these Negroes in turn were carrying shotguns and rifles. Some of the Negroes involved were observed to get into a two-tone blue Buick, license AZ-2800, Tennessee, subsequently determined to be registered to one J. W. Wadlington of 1541 Guasco, for a 1958 Rambler, and not a Buick. Davis pointed out that frequently licenses are transferred from one car to another without them being so registered with the Automobile Registration Bureau. [redacted] stated that later about 5:30 p.m., while checking the area, Officers J. C. Kellum and R. E. Bedford of the Memphis Police Department observed the above-described Rambler parked on LeMoyne Drive across from the college gymnasium. It was unoccupied at the time. They thereafter observed in the car a pamphlet listing student grievances and talked to two individuals who came up and identified themselves as the normal occupants of the car, namely, Gerald Robinson, male Negro, age 20, of 1541 Guasco, who stated he was the driver and owner of the car, and his companion, Jessie Chatman, male Negro, age 19, of 1561 Humbert. Both stated they were students at LeMoyne-Owen College. Both were reluctant at first to discuss what had happened early in the afternoon but finally did admit being involved in a shooting incident earlier that afternoon. They related to the interviewing officers that several of the Invaders had been roaming the LeMoyne-Owen College armed with shotguns and rifles with scopes affixed thereto; that the Invaders had become angry with them because they had told the Invaders they did not belong on the campus; and that the students at LeMoyne could handle the situation with regard to their grievances without the help of the Invaders. Several angry words were exchanged and at this time the Invaders chased the two students, along with another male Negro, name unknown, from the campus firing shots into the air, while doing so.

Both Chatman and Robinson stated they did not know the Invaders by name but felt they could possibly identify them were they to see them again.

Detective [redacted] stated that since these individuals did not wish to file any formal complaints with the Police Department that for the present no further investigation to his knowledge was being conducted by the Memphis Police Department relative to this incident.

Also on December 2, 1968, it was ascertained from source one that following the November 26, 1968, incident at LeMoyne College when the Invaders headed by Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson left the campus, Watson was overheard to state "We couldn't let them run us off. It would cost us some support." Watson, along with Lewis Welch of the Invaders, had also told of an alleged "shoot-out" at LeMoyne College earlier that day stating that three LeMoyne students came on the campus and attacked them with blazing guns in an effort to run them, the Invaders, off the campus. They stated that they, the Invaders, returned the fire and ran the students off the campus. Watson and Welch indicated that John Charles Smith, an Invader and who is currently on parole from the State of California where he was charged in Los Angeles in 1966 with assault with a deadly weapon and who is currently residing with his mother and step-father, Mr. and Mrs. John Borden, at 2430 Vollentine, had done most of the shooting at these students with a .22 caliber automatic rifle. They stated that another Invader, Robert Lee Wilson, also known as "Cornbread," residing 139 West Fields had shot at the students with a pistol.

Source one added that Watson was pleased that the newspapers in Memphis had given so much coverage to the takeover of the campus and the part played in it by him and he particularly was pleased that they had talked about the "liberated areas," the buildings which had been taken over by the Invaders and their associates. Watson was also particularly pleased about the publicity showing the Invaders having a black power flag prominently displayed on the LeMoyne-Owen campus.

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Source one added that it has been reliably ascertained that within the past week Invaders Roy Lee Turks, John Charles Smith, Horace Hall, Maurice Lewis, and one James E. Griffin have been engaging in target practice with a .22 caliber automatic rifle.

On December 3, 1968, Detective [redacted] advised that the Homicide Bureau of the Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department is now further investigating the purported shooting in the vicinity of the LeMoyne campus on the afternoon of November 26, 1968.

On the evening of December 2, 1968, a second source advised that on the morning of December 2, 1968, the administrative staff and faculty committee of LeMoyne-Owen College had met with the Student Council and had gone over the demands made by the students. The source advised that generally the Student Council and the faculty and administration had worked out an equitable agreement whereby most of the demands of the students were being met. This source stated that the administration definitely had to refuse two of the demands, namely, that tuition be lowered and that public dances be permitted to be held on campus. The source pointed out that some of the issues will still remain in a discussion stage adding for example that an unlimited use of the school swimming pool cannot be permitted at this time due to safety measures and the lack of adequate lifeguards. Required assemblies will be abolished. The gymnasium will be open for students except when used by classes or organized teams. There will be more black curriculum offered including student participation in the upcoming Conference on African and Africa-American Studies at Atlanta University and the development for additional courses to provide for an inter-disciplinary minor in African Studies. The school will also attempt if possible to establish a campus health services. Prices in the cafeteria cannot be lowered at this time but efforts will be made to improve the cafeteria food and price structure.

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Source two stated that some of the students will still in all probability boycott the cafeteria.

Also on December 3, 1968, Detective [redacted] advised that he had determined through the Homicide Bureau, Memphis Police Department, that several of the Invaders had been arrested on November 30, 1968, in Memphis by the Memphis Police Department. Among these was James Edward Griffin, alias James Cordosya, listing his residence as 1057 Walker, a male Negro, age 19, born October 16, 1949, who was arrested on request of the Document Squad, being arrested around 3:40 p.m., when Officers W. H. White and A. Hall were cruising south on Hernando north of Linden Avenue about 3:40 p.m. and observed Griffin along with another male Negro walking south on Hernando. Griffin appeared to have a knife stapped on his right leg. Officers stopped Griffin to check to see what he possessed, at which time he started to pull the knife out and he was placed under arrest and transported to headquarters. The knife which he possessed was a machete with a 14-inch blade. Also found on his possession were a colored sheath, two rounds of .22 caliber short ammunition and 59 rounds of .22 caliber long rifle shells. Griffin told the arresting officers that he had been wearing this knife "up town all day" and that some of Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson's associates had told him it was all right and that the police had not bothered him prior to this time.

He was charged with carrying a dangerous weapon.

Detective [redacted] advised that on October 11, 1968, Officers S. W. Latham and J. N. Shelton observed a blue Cadillac with a light green fender at Linden and Hernando bearing 1969 California license BKR374, on which a police broadcast was outstanding to be checked on in connection with two robberies which had occurred November 29, 1968. They also observed approximately ten to fifteen Negroes

armed with sticks going north on Hernando and later observed them at Linden and Hernando and on close observation noted that three of these male Negroes were armed with shotguns. They began waving their sticks and looking in the direction of the squad car driven by the above officers and one male Negro approached the car, claimed he was a member of the Invaders, and inquired about an arrest which had been made just prior to this incident on Hernando north of Linden by Squad Car 212. This involved the arrest of Griffin outlined above.

At this point, Officer Shelton ordered the male Negroes to drop the shotguns and some unidentified member of the Invaders asked Officer Shelton if the officers were looking for a confrontation, whereupon one of the male Negroes told the officers that he would have "to make" him put the shotgun down. Later this male Negro was identified as Horace Hall. The other two Negroes with shotguns were dressed in blue-jean pants and blue-jean type jackets, and they ran south on Hernando from Linden Avenue. Officers called for help, went around the corner and found four male Negroes including one Robert Webster armed with a shotgun, and on searching him found that he possessed eight 20-gauge shotgun shells and one straight razor. The officers found Horace Hall to be armed with a breech-loaded shotgun and refused to drop the shotgun after being ordered to do so by Patrolman Shelton.

Upon searching Horace Hall, one 12-gauge shotgun shell was found in his possession. The male Negroes were placed under arrest and the other two in addition to Webster and Hall could not positively be identified and were released from this location. Hall and Webster were placed under arrest on charge of investigation - robbery and also charged with carrying a dangerous weapon.

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At this point when the arrestees were being placed in the squad car, an unidentified alleged member of the Invaders walked over to the squad car, at which time Robert Webster was heard by the arresting officers to tell this unidentified Negro to call "Sweet Willie Wine."

Detective [redacted] advised that information obtained during the arrest reflected that Robert Webster has no middle name, was born July 11, 1949, and resided at 1423 Goodlee in the rear.

Detective [redacted] advised that the arrest report for Robert Webster reflects no middle name and reflects that he is a male Negro, date of birth March 25, 1949, showing his residence 1585 East McLemore.

Detective [redacted] added that on the evening of November 30, 1968, at about 8:45 p.m., Officers E. P. Gilless and A. T. Schmidt assigned to Squad Car 6 observed a 1960 white Thunderbird bearing Tennessee License [illegible]3418 going east on Crump Boulevard at Camilla. A broadcast had previously been put out by the Police Dispatcher to check on a 1960 Thunderbird occupied by three male Negroes and upon stopping the car, the driver who identified himself as Louis Welch, also known as Lewis Welch, presented his drivers license and was asked to open the trunk and then hesitated saying he did not have his trunk key as he had left it at home. The officers asked him for his keys. They tried the trunk with one of the keys, the trunk opened, and on checking same they found a sawed-off .22 rifle with a 13-inch barrel, it being a Winchester bolt-action, .22 caliber Model No. 67. The rifle was loaded and Welch further had in his possession 23 long rifle and 10 short rifle, .22 caliber bullets, along with two .32 caliber bullets. Welch stated that the rifle did not belong to him but was unable to describe the party to whom it allegedly belonged.

The other occupants of the car identified themselves as Shirley Young, Negro female, address 1311 McMillan, and Rufus Henderson of 1765 Preston, Telephone No. 947-3993. They claimed that they had only been with the defendant approximately one hour and they had met him at the Riviera Club at Mississippi and Richmond.

Welch answered the description of a male Negro involved in an Armed Person Robbery call which Car 416 had previously handled at Linden and Bermando about 4:30 p.m., in which the subject got away. Welch was arrested on suspected robbery. Young and Henderson were released.

Detective [redacted] advised that on October 2, 1968, Robert Webster was released and apparently no formal charges will be placed against him in the absence of additional information. Detective [redacted] advised that James Griffin and Lewis Welch both appeared in Memphis City Court, December 2, 1968; were both held to the State of Tennessee (Shelby County Grand Jury) on $250 bond each on charges of "Carrying a Dangerous Weapon"; and that on December 3, 1968, Horace Hall appeared in Memphis City Court and was held to the State of Tennessee under $10,000 bond on charges of "Assault to Murder, Common Assault, and Carrying a Dangerous Weapon."

Also on December 3, 1968, source one advised that Lance "Sweet Willie Wine" Watson was most angered when he learned that some of his lieutenants, namely, Webster, Griffin, Hall and Welch, had been arrested and made the statement that they had no business messing with their firearms out in the open and that "Our Minister of Defense has got to control these guns or I am going to take his position," it being noted by source one that Robert Taylor is the alleged Minister of Defense. Watson stated "We made a showing at LeMoyne and that was enough. You don't have to walk the streets with weapons and let everyone know you have them."



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On December 3, 1968, sources one, two and three advised that it is not anticipated at this time that either the SDS or the Invaders will have any effective influence over the LeMoyne College students and they feel that the LeMoyne situation will be worked out internally between the students and faculty.

On December 2, 1968, information concerning the settlement of the LeMoyne dispute was furnished to Mr. David Pagano of the 111th Military Intelligence Corps, Third Army, Memphis, Tennessee, and to Lieutenant E. H. Arkin, Intelligence Bureau, Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department.

BLACK ORGANIZING PROJECT (BOP),
also known as Black Organizing Power,
Afro-American Brotherhood,
Black Student Association,
Invaders,
LeMoyne Intercollegiate Chapter of the
National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People (NAACP),
City Organizers

On April 18, 1968, a first source advised that a black power group in Memphis which has been in existence for several months has until recently been known as Black Organizing Power. It is now known as Black Organizing Project (BOP), also known as Black Organizing Power, with five cells or parts, known as (1) Afro-American Brotherhood (AAB), primarily consisting of Owen College students; (2) Black Student Association (BSA), primarily consisting of Memphis State University (MSU) Negro students; (3) LeMoyne Intercollegiate Chapter of the NAACP, consisting of LeMoyne College students; (4) the Invaders, consisting mostly of high school dropouts; and (5) the City Organizers, comprised of young adults.

AAB has about 12 members; BSA has about 20 members; the Invaders has about 15 members; the LeMoyne group has about 20 members; and the City Organizers has about 20 members.

Source one advised that the BOP attempts to create pride in black identity, attempts to teach and promote the teaching of Negro history, and to promote black culture and obtain more employment for young Negroes.

The Executive Secretary of BOP is Charles Laverne Cabbage.

On February 16, 1968, Charles Laverne Cabbage personally acknowledged being leader of BOP, claiming he is the impetus of black power in Memphis, Tennessee, and that BOP's purpose is to stimulate in the young Negroes a sense of black identity, black pride, and black consciousness. He said his group follows the teachings of Student Nonviolent

Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leaders H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael but that BOP did not necessarily exist as a formal SNCC unit. CABELL further admitted he had made statements such as "Memphis should be burned" and "Memphis should have a good race riot," but claimed he did not mean these statements literally, merely endeavoring to shock the community into doing something to help the black race.

On February 27, 1968, a second source advised that at a public meeting on February 26, 1968, the BOP Chairman John Burrell Smith told a Negro audience, "We've got to do some fighting," and "You'd better get some guns. You're going to need them before this is over. You can't pray your way out."

On June 6,1968, the second source advised that BOP primarily consists of about 20 to 25 young college and high school students and school dropouts, unemployed and not looking for work, who continually preach hatred of the white race and capitalistic economic system and advocating and predicting violence by blacks. The overall plan of BOP, according to source two, is to scare the Memphis community leaders, both black and white, into fearing black militancy. The BOP leaders then hope to convince the community to fund them as a form of subtle blackmail whereby BOP can prevent racial violence. Source two said that BOP is more interested in publicity and money than in direct action, but is nevertheless preaching violence in an effort to scare the community.

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), as it is known today, came into being at a founding convention held at Port Huron, Michigan, in June, 1962. The SDS is an association of young people on the left and has a current program of protesting the draft, promoting a campaign for youth to develop a conscientious objector status, denouncing United States intervention in the war in Vietnam, and to "radically transform" the university community, and provide for its complete control by students. Gus Hall, General Secretary, Communist Party, USA, when interviewed by a representative of United Press International in San Francisco, California, on May 14, 1965, described the SDS as a part of the "responsible left" which the Party has "going for us." At the June, 1965, SDS National Convention, an anticommunist proviso was removed from the SDS constitution. In the October 7, 1966, issue of "New Left Notes," the official publication of SDS, an SDS spokesman stated that there are some communists in SDS and they are welcome. The national headquarters of this organization as of July 24, 1968, was located in Room 206, 1608 West Madison Street, Chicago, Illinois.

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Character: RACIAL MATTERS;

INTERNAL SECURITY - SDS

Reference: Memorandum prepared at Memphis, Tennessee, dated and captioned as above.

All sources (except any listed below) whose identities are concealed in referenced communication have furnished reliable information in the past.

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